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Section 15

State Water Plan - Cedar/Beaver Basin

Water-Related Recreation

15.1 Introduction

This section describes the water-related recreational aspects, facilities and resources found in the Cedar/Beaver Basin. Data are presented from the Utah State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning (SCORP) process.¹⁶ This process provided information for the preparation of a priority list of key water-related recreational and environmental issues to be addressed in the future. Information includes consumer or participant's expressions of outdoor recreation needs/demands, issues and alternative solutions.

15.2 Setting

The western part of the Cedar/Beaver Basin contains large areas of land where the eight inches of annual rainfall produces mainly desert shrubs and grasses. The southern and eastern parts of the basin are more productive with extensive areas of irrigated cropland blending into high mountain watersheds where most of the water supplies originate. The reservoirs, clear streams, alpine scenery and red rock plateaus are prime attractions. In contrast, there are old historic towns and the remains of a once booming mining industry. The skiing industry is fast becoming a major recreation activity resulting in a favorable impact on the economy. These are the resources

supporting the recreation base throughout the basin. They can accommodate a variety of seasonally appropriate outdoor recreation activities. As would be anticipated, sites associated with water are most often preferred.

The major public land managers are the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service and the Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration. These four agencies control about 80 percent of the basin area. These areas of public lands contain most of the water-related recreational facilities and settings. This gives them responsibility as well as control over much of the recreation in the basin. There are developed as well as primitive areas located in various environments. In addition, there are two small areas of Indian Tribal lands, one in the Cedar City area and one near Cove Fort.

The Utah Division of Parks and Recreation manages two state parks: Iron Mission in Cedar City and Minersville which includes the reservoir between Beaver and Minersville. The Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration has the responsibility for about 283,000 acres of school trust lands. Most of these lands are in scattered sections and are used primarily for livestock grazing and wildlife habitat. Because of the arid climate, there is little potential for

■ Outdoor recreation is generally enhanced when it is based in a water-related setting. Surface water reservoirs provide flat-water recreational opportunities. Free-flowing streams are an important part of the recreational scene.

water-based recreation, although other recreational pursuits are followed. The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources administers the Clear Lake Waterfowl Management Area. This area is fed by springs supplying about 15,000 acre-feet of water annually. Clear Lake is located on the Pacific Flyway.

There are three major points of interest: Old Cove Fort, Old Irontown and the Jefferson Hunt Historical Site. There are many parks, picnic areas and campgrounds along with undeveloped areas where outdoor activities can be enjoyed. Swimming pools and golf courses are located in some of the communities. There are fisheries in most of the perennial streams while the reservoirs and lakes provide fishing and flat-water activities. Ski resorts are located at Brian Head at the head of Parowan Canyon and Elk Meadows in Beaver Canyon.

Outdoor recreation and tourism are becoming major economic activities in Utah and in the Cedar/Beaver Basin area. They impact lodging, transportation, food and retail sales bringing much needed income into this rural area. Over 2,800 jobs are related to tourism in the Southwest Multi-County District according to a recent outdoor recreation household survey.

The Beaver Canyon Scenic Byway, U-153, is the only one in Beaver County. It runs from Beaver for 17 miles to Elk Meadows, ascending the Tushar Mountains in the Fish Lake National Forest and then on to Junction and U.S. Highway 89. This road provides access to the Mt. Holly Ski Resort.

There are three scenic byways and two backways in Iron County. The Brian Head-Panguitch Lake Scenic Byway runs from Parowan along U-143 up Parowan Canyon, past Brian Head and through Cedar Breaks National Monument for about 17 miles before leaving the basin on its way to Panguitch via Panguitch Lake. It passes through alpine stretches of the Dixie National Forest and past Brian Head Ski Resort.

The Cedar Breaks Scenic Byway, U-148, runs between U-14 and U-143 through the Dixie National Forest and Cedar Breaks National Monument. The Markagunt Scenic Byway runs from Cedar City to the Long Valley Junction on U-14. It runs up beautiful Cedar Canyon into the Dixie National Forest for 16 miles before leaving the basin.

The Kolob Reservoir Backway runs from Virgin north to U-14 six miles east of Cedar City. The north part of the backway travels through about six miles of thick forests in the basin. The Dry Lakes/Summit Backway runs from Summit through private land and Dixie National Forest for 19 miles before joining U-143 eight miles south of Parowan.

There are four recreational motorized and non-motorized trails projects funded by the Division of Parks and Recreation. Two of these, Piute ATV Trail on the Tushar Mountains and Virgin River Rim Trail on the Markagunt Plateau, are on the basin periphery. The Elk Valley Trail is in Beaver County in the upper Beaver River area. The Brian Head Trail System is located in and around the Brian Head Ski Resort.

Nine projects have been assisted through the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund program administered by the National Park Service. These include three in Beaver County with total grants of nearly \$224,800 and six in Iron County using over \$321,000 grant funds.

15.3 Policy Issues and Recommendations

A public meeting was held in Cedar City in September, 1990. The following major issues were brought forth and prioritized by those present.

- Improved highway and site signage to give directions to public and private facilities.



Cross-country skiing near Brian Head

- A critical need to provide stable and/or new recreation funding sources.

- Improve and update recreation facility and support facility infrastructure to encourage revenue generation from tourism.

- Provide more winter recreation opportunities and make a longer season for tourism and leisure service business.

- Improve the comprehensive planning process for the allocation of natural resources; i.e., look at all uses/conflicts/opportunities for any water, highway or other resources development.

- Plan and construct a comprehensive localized and connecting trail system linking key resource areas such as reservoirs; lakes; forests; national, state, and community parks; Great Western Trail; and American Discovery Trail.

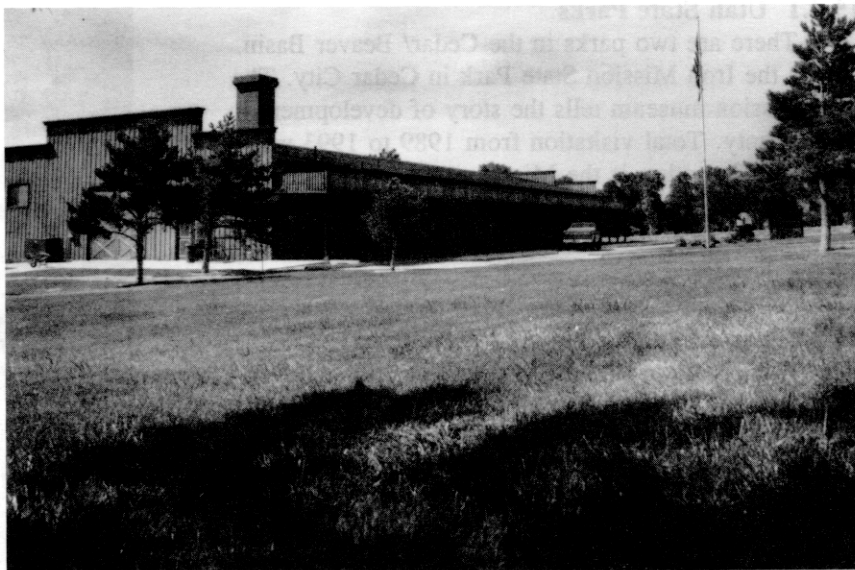
- Improve government agency cooperation and coordination to reduce costly redundancies, dispose of federal wilderness issues and, one way or another, get on with it!

It has also been noted that alternatives are needed to protect areas such as lower Coal Creek. This and similar areas are easily abused by ATV users.

Some of the participants noted that over 50 percent of all tourists visiting the state of Utah pass by Cedar City and Beaver on I-15. These visitors can be attracted by well designed and accommodated facilities.

A similar request, again as part of the Utah SCORP process, was made to recreation providing agencies in early 1991. They were asked their major concerns or issues. These are listed below.

- Inadequate funding of respective agencies.
- Need for interagency coordination.
- Assuring environmental quality.
- Public and private cooperation--partnerships, coordination.
- Vandalism.
- Need for recreation development and infrastructure improvement.
- Rising cost of liability insurance.
- Deteriorating facilities and systems.
- Securing volunteers--importance of volunteerism.



Iron Mission State Park

- Communicating and justifying the economic significance of recreation.
- Overcrowding of existing recreation facilities and resources.
- Law enforcement.
- Access to public lands--closures by private land owners.
- Recreation water allocations--leaving enough for recreation and fisheries.
- Environmental education--reducing conflicts, damage and management costs.

Over 23 issues were identified by government agencies. These range from funding to wetland and cultural site protection, application of computer technology, greenways and trail development needs. It was understandably different from issues identified by resource users who had a few common concerns for funding, new facilities, wilderness, government coordination and access problems. Many of these issues can be realized or obviated by good design, adequate capitalization, public participation in the planning process, and coordination and good management of water resources development or river corridor protection.

15.4 Outdoor Recreational Use

The use of recreational areas has been rapidly increasing during the past number of years. This use is expected to increase even faster in the future.

15.4.1 Utah State Parks

There are two parks in the Cedar/ Beaver Basin. One is the Iron Mission State Park in Cedar City. The Iron Mission museum tells the story of development in Iron County. Total visitation from 1989 to 1993 was 158,526. The other is the Minersville State Park which provides boating, fishing and camping on and around Minersville Reservoir. There were 52,365 visitors during the period 1989 to 1993.

15.4.2 Cedar Breaks National Monument

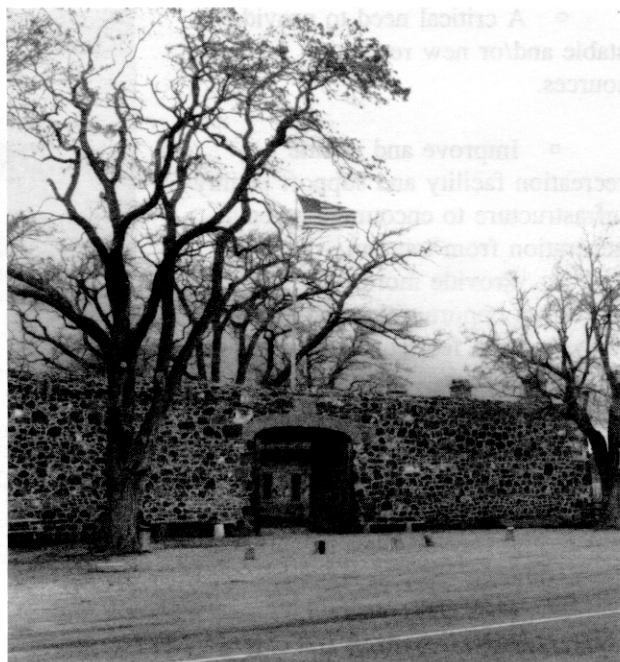
The visitation to the monument has not changed significantly during the last five years. Visitations during these years were: 1989, 498,472; 1990, 430,268; 1991, 469,133; 1992, 406,477; and 1993, 578,268.

15.4.3 Economic Development Administration Tourism Study

In 1992, the Economic Development Administration conducted a study which developed an inventory of tourism support facilities in the Southwest Multi-County District. There are 12 airports (nine have no services), 12 roadside rest areas, 118 campgrounds, 123 cultural/recreational sites and over 5,500 rooms in 200 motels. Several general conclusions reached in the study include:

- Tourism represents one of the most important activities in the Utah economy.
- Prospects for continued growth in the industry are favorable.
- Impacts on state and local revenues are generally positive.
- Tourism can help stabilize and diversify the economic base without displacing other industries.
- Although the infrastructure to support tourism is substantial, improvements and/or additions are needed, particularly in state and federal parks/recreation areas.
- Many sources exist to finance tourism infrastructure improvements.

The study concludes with the importance of resident and non-resident tourism. Most data is related to non-resident tourism. High quality recreation facilities are critical to the success of tourism and



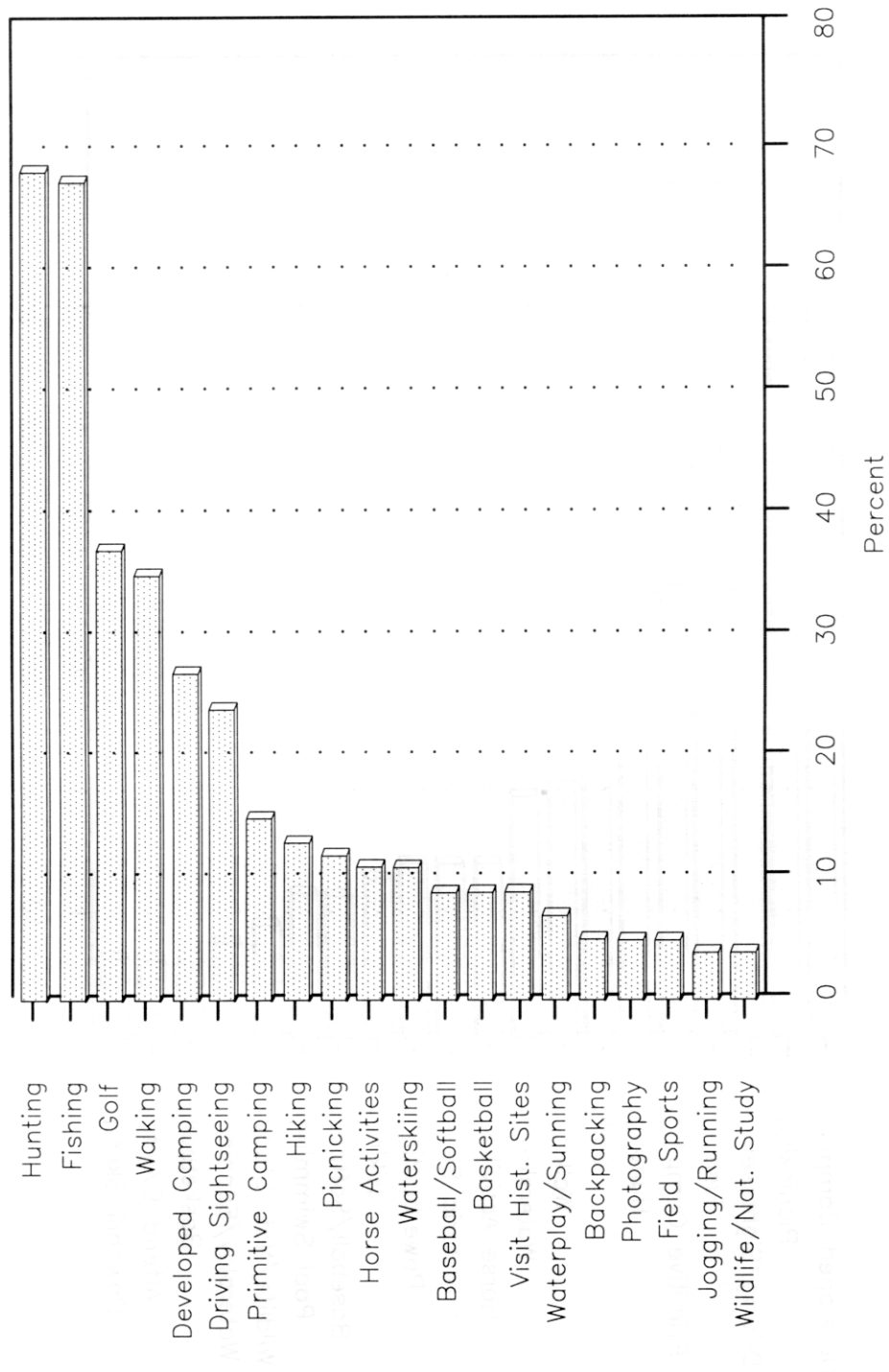
Cove Fort

marketing in the state of Utah. Major funding and the discovery and utilization of new sources of revenue continue to be of the highest priority. Water development should incorporate adequate infrastructure for leisure services and facilities and provide continued support for operation and maintenance.

15.5 Outdoor Recreation Activity Needs

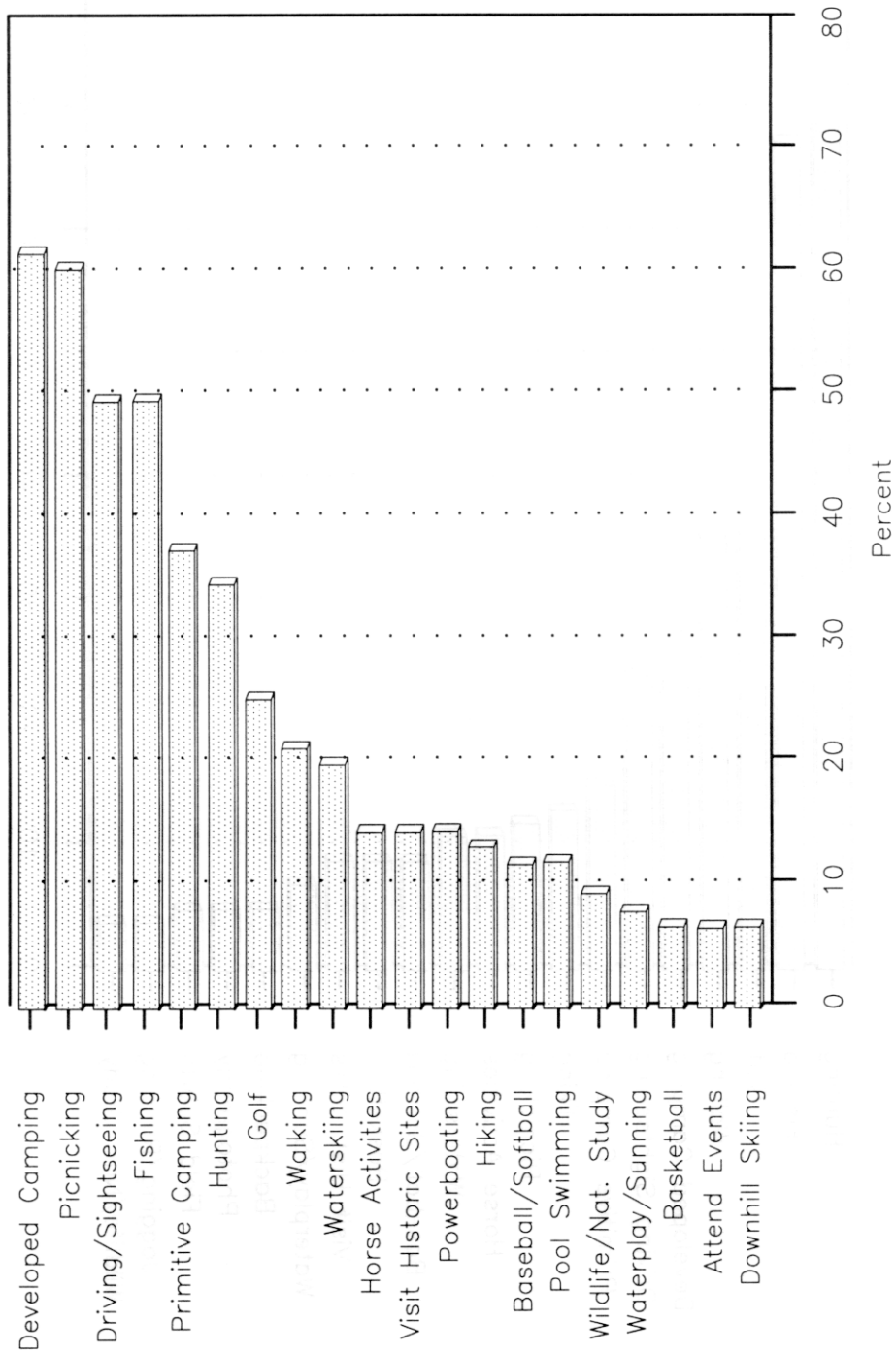
Figures 15-1 through 15-5 are from the 1990-91 Utah SCORP Household Survey that received input from over 2,400 homes in Utah.¹⁵ The figures describe the top 20 favored "individual" outdoor recreation activities, the top 20 favorite "family" activities (we do different things in a group or with a family), new "community" facilities that are needed, "statewide" facilities needing improvement, and new "statewide" facilities needed. Many activities and facilities are preferred near water, while a few, like fishing and boating, are clearly dependent on water or water developments such as reservoirs. ■ ■

Figure 15-1
TOP 20 FAVORITE INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES



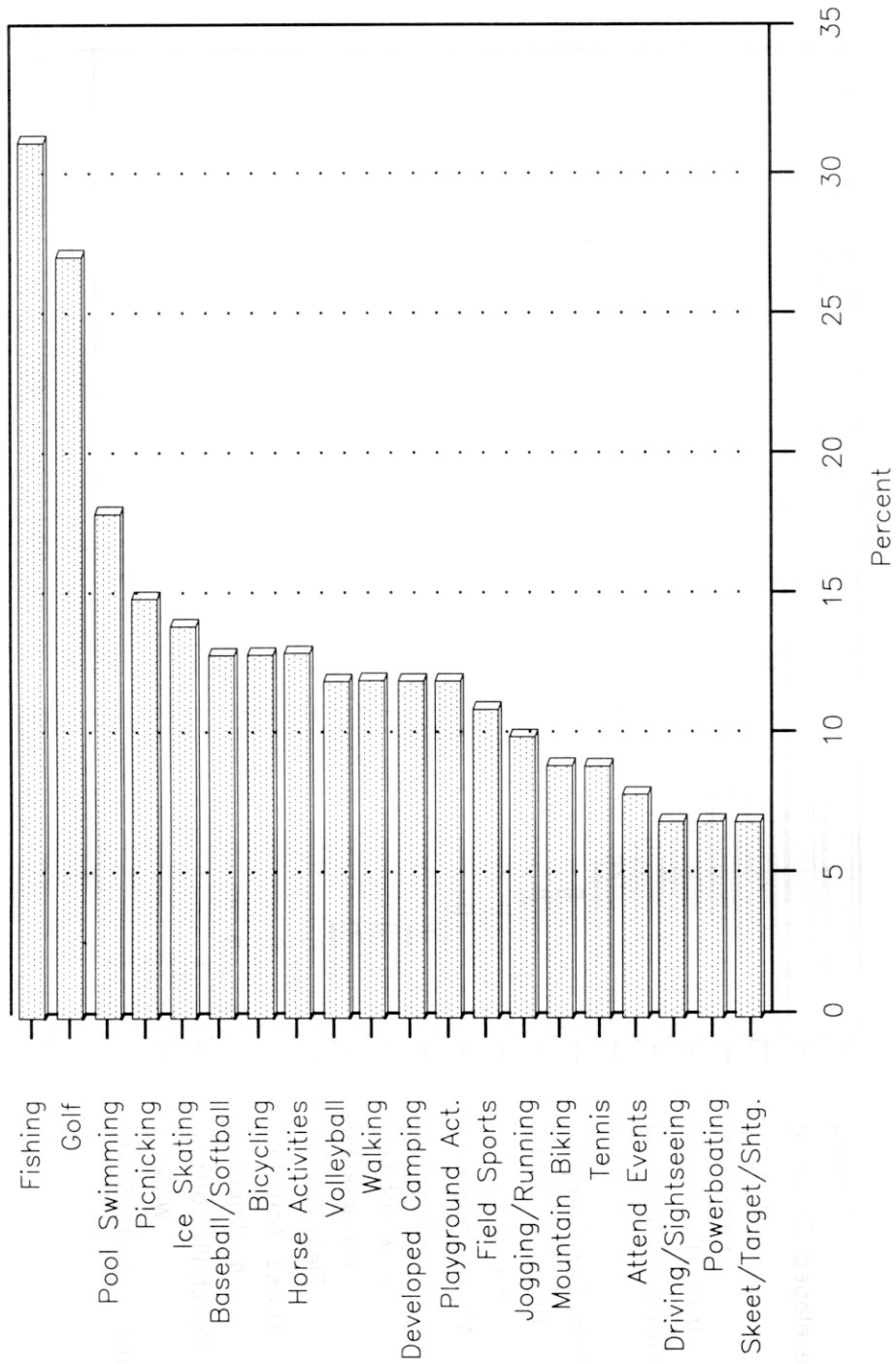
Note: Includes all of the Southwest Multi-County District
435 Respondents

Figure 15-2
TOP 20 FAVORITE FAMILY ACTIVITIES



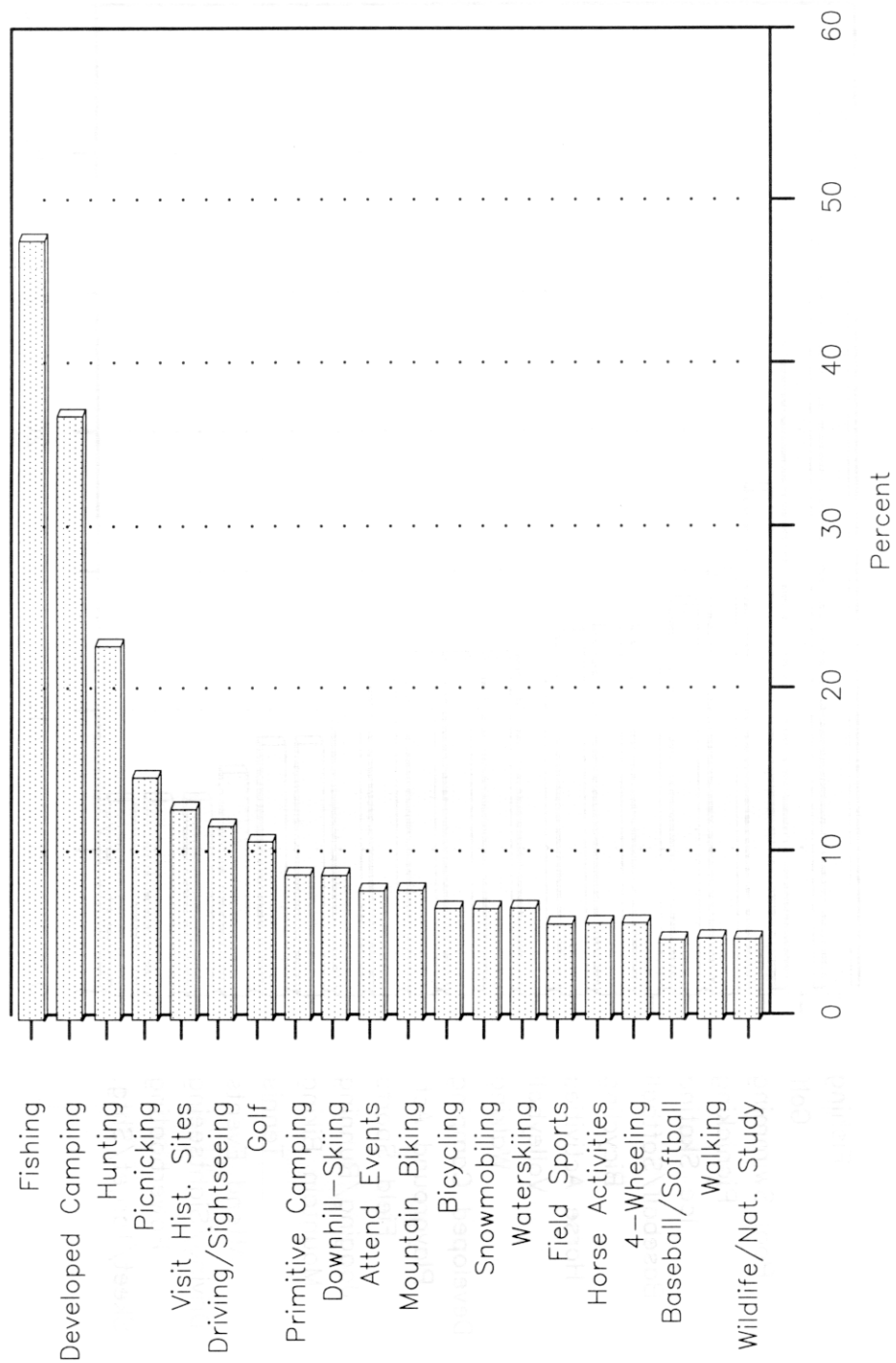
Note: Includes all of the Southwest Multi-County District
435 Respondents

Figure 15-3
NEW COMMUNITY FACILITIES NEEDED



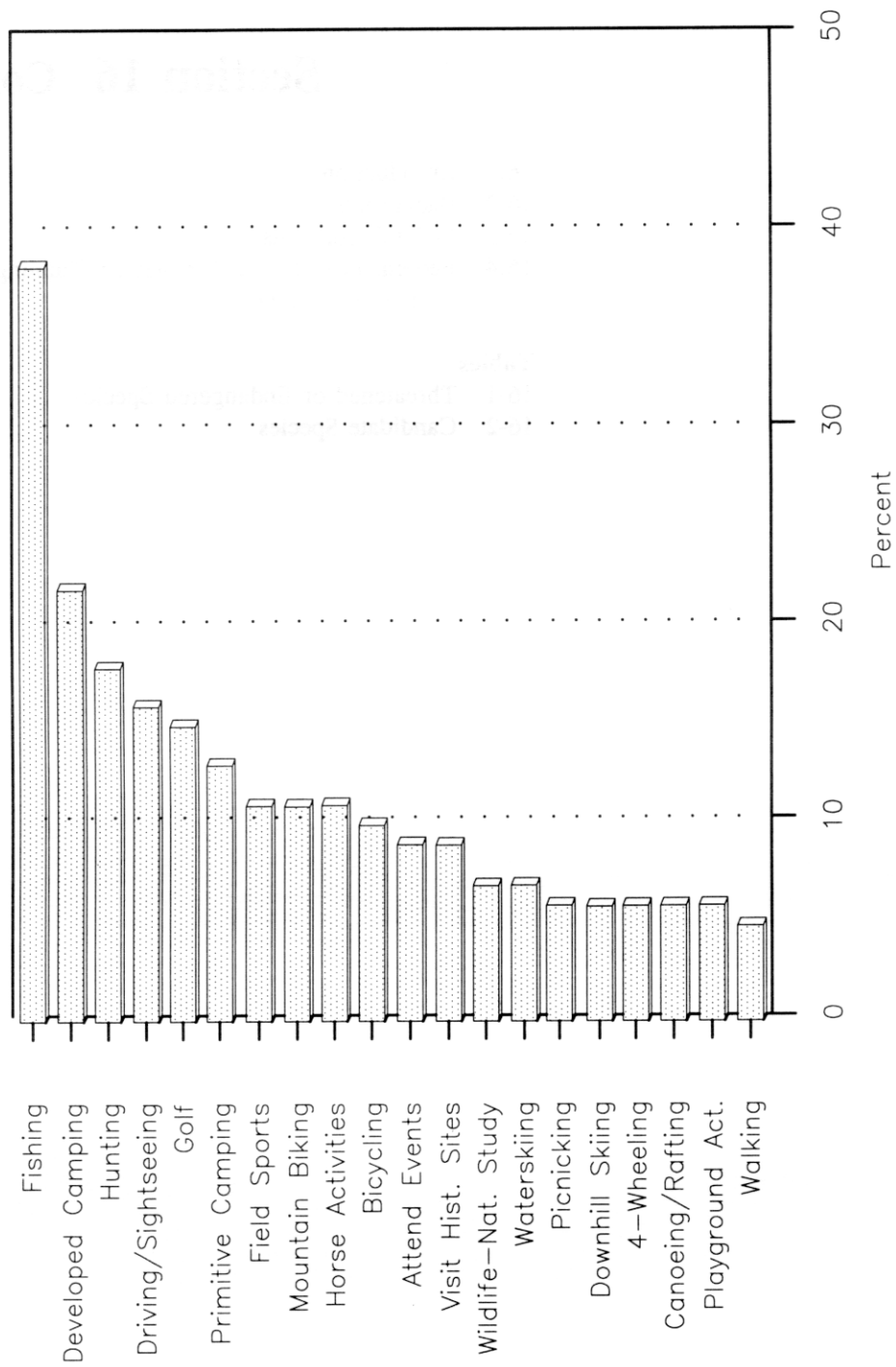
Note: Includes all of the Southwest Multi-County District

Figure 15-4
STATEWIDE FACILITIES NEEDING IMPROVEMENT



Note: Includes all of the Southwest Multi-County District

Figure 15-5
STATEWIDE NEW FACILITIES NEEDED



Note: Includes all of the Southwest Multi-County District